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to him when the drums called that god, could not be held accountable for what he did while his god had him in his control.

No stranger, no man who came to live in his wife's village, even though he had spent a good part of his life there, took it upon himself to offer advice to his wife's family. Again and again we would hear from men and women on the river, "In our village we do it this way," or, "We only carry the corpse on the head twice. Our spirits don't like to be troubled more often," or, "Mawu as a name for the Great God is used in our village, but not everywhere on the river."

There was the experience with several sacred images of village gods we had bought from an upper-river village. Our paddlers refused to carry them for us from the village to the boats, and it was with marked uneasiness that they permitted us to put them into the boats.

"We do not know what these gods can do. We do not know what is hateful to them. They are the gods of another people. We won't carry them."

But with the *gomi*—the child of the village of his mother's family, it was quite otherwise. He was a member of the village, he had a voice in its governing, he knew its gods. If he belonged to the family of the chief of the clan, if, let us say, his older brother were the chief, or if he was one of several nephews of a chief who had no surviving brothers, then at the death of the chief there would be a krutu, and the men of the village would decide which one of the several men who were eligible for the office was the most capable. Though rank was hereditary there was always selection among several heirs, and again the final word rested with the people of the clan. The offices of lesser chiefs—village chiefs who were subject to the clan chief, or bassias who served the chiefs—were passed on in the same manner.

While law making was in the hands of the chiefs, or captains, and the krutu over which they presided, law enforcement was the task of the bassias. It was they who saw to it that the orders of the chiefs were carried out. When

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625 some action was decided upon by the krutu, the several bassias were entrusted with its execution. Most villages [562] had at least one woman bassia, and she was responsible to the village head for the behavior of the women. If food was to be gathered for a festival, if the village was to be cleaned for a special occasion like a visit to the village of strangers, it was she who saw that the work was done properly. If there were disputes between two women, it was she who carried the news to the village head, and she who transmitted his censure or decision, if the affair was not of sufficient gravity to warrant the calling together of the old men.

562 "Do the women talk in the big krutu?" we asked Bassia Anaisi, of the Granman's village.

"No, not in krutu. But they talk plenty at home."

623 The bassia, we learned, had other duties. He was not 624 only the messenger of his chief, he was also his official spokesman at krutu, and his intermediary in all matters of authority. If a council of the village was to be called, it was he who announced this to the men. When the men had gathered, it was not the chief who spoke, but the bassia who propounded the questions at issue. It was for this reason that Kasanya had leaned over and advised us to call for our town man.

623 Krutu, we learned, were of two types. Every village had its "*G'a Sembe*"—its council of the older men—who acted as an advisory body to the village captain, and the "*Lanti Krutu*," the meeting of all the men of the village. In this latter general assembly rested the final decisions.

Any important issue involving the village would be handled in two krutu, the g'a sembe krutu, and the lanti krutu. In this big lanti krutu where all the man were represented the bassia would speak the words of the chief and of the old men, and then the people would "go aside." This going aside was the concomitant of every consultation, no matter how informal the group or how unimportant the question which was being considered.